

WHO SAYS IT IS NOT A CUT?

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong objection to the proposed Medicare cuts and in objection to the propaganda we are hearing from the Republicans on their plan. It is not a cut. It is simple mathematics.

The elderly served by Medicare are growing, the population served. Thus, increases in funding are needed to provide services for more people. If you cut from the rate of growth, you either have to push people out or you provide them less services for what they are paying. It is all too simple.

Yet the majority would have us believe the reductions in Medicare are not cuts. Are we going back to the days when seniors had to choose between health care or food on their tables? Let us be honest about it. By cutting a program with a growing population, the result will mean more rationing. Health care will be rationed to those who cannot afford to pay more out of their pocket and will be asked to pay more and more of their fixed incomes or greatly lower their standard of living for seniors.

Ask yourselves these questions: Do you want poor seniors to pay more for less service, choose between health care or food? Do you want your elderly relatives to have surgery in a hospital, pushed to the brink of bankruptcy from cuts in Medicare? Or do you want a surgeon whose training has been reduced because of cuts in Medicare?

WHERE ARE THE DEMOCRATS?

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, for decades Medicare has been a vital program that has helped millions of Americans get the medical care they need. Now, the Republicans in Congress are working for an even stronger Medicare system. The Democrats, on the other hand, are only offering scare tactics.

Here are the facts: Under the Republican plan, Medicare spending per beneficiary will increase from \$4,800 today to \$6,700 in the year 2002. Mr. Speaker, there are no cuts. We are working on a plan to save Medicare from bankruptcy, while increasing benefits for the seniors of America.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the most important issues that Congress will face this year. Where are the Democrats? The Republicans in Congress have recognized this fact and have chosen to tackle the problem head on. It is our goal that Medicare remains strong for today's seniors and for generations to come.

THE TAXPAYER BILL OF RIGHTS

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, there is a taxpayer bill of rights coming to the floor. Let me say this: There can be no real taxpayer bill of rights as long as after it is all over a taxpayer is still considered guilty in front of a tax court. That is what is happening.

The IRS is successful once again. They have killed it for years. They say the major problem with the Traficant bill is it is too costly and the Government will lose too much revenue.

Let me ask this of all people here in Washington, DC: If some bureaucrats in a backroom would have scored the Constitution, would we, in fact, have a bill of rights today, ladies and gentlemen? Grand juries are too costly, juries are too expensive.

Let us tell it like it is. The Democrats abandoned taxpayers on this issue. In my opinion Democrats failed. I am a Democrat.

Republicans have a chance to right a major wrong. A taxpayer should be innocent until proven guilty like anybody else, and I should have a chance to bring my bill in the form of an amendment to that taxpayer bill of rights.

INTRODUCTION OF BIF-SAIF BILL

(Mrs. ROUKEMA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I introduced legislation that will have a monumental impact on the financial services industry and depositors. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive reform of the deposit insurance funds and will merge the bank and thrift charters. This BIF-SAIF legislation reflects the hard work of a bipartisan working group of the Financial Institutions Subcommittee, which I chair, that was developed over the last several months.

Since the spring, the subcommittee has held three hearings on BIF-SAIF. The last of these hearings brought forth strong support for a comprehensive approach to the problem, which this legislation being marked up today represents.

In brief, the legislation provides a financial solution to the problem of the insurance funds similar to that proposed by the administration. It recapitalizes the SAIF and through the use of a one-time special assessment of SAIF members. It spreads the FICO costs proportionately among all members of the FDIC as of the date of enactment. In addition, it merges the BIF-SAIF.

What is critical here, is that it goes beyond the administration-sponsored financial fix and merges the bank and thrift charters on January 1, 1998, requiring thrifts to convert to banks.

This legislation will have a monumental impact on the financial services industry and provides a comprehensive solution to a complex problem. This bill will ensure that we do not see a repeat of the savings and loan debacle of the 1980's. It is a fair and balanced approach that will prevent the need for any future bailouts of the thrift industry.

I urge my colleagues' cosponsorship.

It is of vital concern to the banks the S&L's and the depositors and taxpayers.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS ON CHANGES TO THE MEDICARE SYSTEM

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, after months of hiding their Medicare plan from public view, House Republicans are going to give the American people a look, but, be careful not to blink—you might miss it.

Republicans have announced that they will only have a single day of hearings to discuss their plan to radically dismantle the health care system that serves 37 million American seniors. So far this year, Republicans have treated the public to weeks of politically-charged hearings on Whitewater, Waco, and Ruby Ridge. But, when it comes to the largest cut in the history of Medicare, they cannot find the time on the schedule.

So therefore, I ask unanimous consent for the immediate consideration in the House of House Resolution 221, insisting that adequate time be set aside for public hearings on changes to the Medicare system proposed to be included in the reconciliation bill. The American people deserve open, and thorough hearings on the GOP Medicare plan. Two hundred Democrats have cosponsored a resolution calling for 4 weeks of hearings. If Republicans have nothing to hide, they should agree to let the American people judge their proposal on its merits.

Mr. GEKAS. Objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KNOLLENBERG). Under the Speakers' guidelines, the gentlewoman will not be recognized, because that resolution has been referred to the Committee on Rules and not cleared for consideration.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRIES

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. DOGGETT. Why would a unanimous-consent request to permit the immediate consideration of this resolution not be in order even if it has been referred to a committee. VerDate 20-SEP-95 07:02 Sep 21, 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker has announced the following guidelines—

Mr. DOGGETT. This is an announcement by Speaker GINGRICH?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. First by Speaker O'Neill. It has been a continual policy. It has been the policy of the Speakers. Let the Chair quote precisely from section 757 of the Manual:

The Speaker has announced and enforced a policy of conferring recognition for unanimous consent requests for the consideration of unreported bills and resolutions only when assured that the majority and minority floor and committee leaderships have no objection.

Mr. DOGGETT. Further parliamentary inquiry, the minority leadership has been consulted. Every Democrat has signed on to this proposal to allow us additional time to consider the details of this Medicare plan, and my inquiry would be then if the Democratic minority leadership has agreed to this, it is only the Republican leadership that wants to thwart a fair and open hearing?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is not aware of clearance by all necessary Members.

Mr. DOGGETT. All Democratic Members have signed on to this resolution and the ranking member.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Mr. DOGGETT. The Democratic membership here is indicating for fair and open hearings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is no longer asking for a parliamentary inquiry. He can draw his own conclusions. The Chair has stated the fact.

Mr. DOGGETT. Further parliamentary inquiry, what procedure then would be appropriate for a Member, myself or a Member of our leadership, the gentlewoman from Connecticut, to present? What timing, what form would be appropriate to present a unanimous consent request so that we could have a full hearing on Medicare instead of just 1 day?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must be aware of clearance by all the necessary Members, as announced in the Speaker's policy.

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Mr. DOGGETT. Further parliamentary inquiry then, Mr. Speaker.

If the Democrat leadership comes to the floor of this House and announces its desire to have this resolution considered immediately, will the unanimous-consent request be accepted at that time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KNOLLENBERG). The Chair will repeat. The Chair will not entertain that request according to the guidelines as a matter of discretionary recognition.

Mr. DOGGETT. So, further parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

So a statement then on behalf of the Democrat leadership by the minority leader or by all members of the Demo-

crat Caucus that they request that this unanimous-consent request for full and complete Medicare hearings occur, that would not be enough to get it entertained here on the floor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman understand the Chair's guidelines? They have been stated at great length.

Mr. DOGGETT. If I understood it, I would not be asking the further parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has referred to what is proper. The leadership on both sides must consent to this request, and they have to clear this. It cannot be brought up in this manner.

Mr. DOGGETT. Further parliamentary inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

Unless Speaker GINGRICH clears us having more than 1 day of hearing, it cannot occur. Is that the ruling of the Chair?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The majority floor leader and the chairman of the Committee on Rules must clear this request.

Mr. DOGGETT. So, unless the Republican chairman of the committee, Mr. SOLOMON, and—

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, point of order.

Mr. DOGGETT. We cannot take up a full hearing.

ELIMINATING THE FRAUD AND ABUSE WHICH RIDDLES MEDICAID

(Mrs. SEASTRAND asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, for years the liberal Congresses have been mandating States to spend billions of dollars on programs. I know because I served in the California State Legislature. One such program is Medicaid, which now consumes nearly one-fifth of our State's budgets. This coupled with the fact that \$16 billion a year from this program is lost to fraud and abuse demonstrates the need for genuine reform.

Republicans know that more Washington bureaucracy is not the prescription to save this program. That is why the legislation which we are introducing will give more freedom to State and local officials. And recipients need not fear that they will lose benefits. Our resolution will increase funding to the States by 39 percent over the next 7 years.

Only by dismantling the oversized, inefficient Washington bureaucracy can we eliminate the fraud and abuse which riddles Medicaid. Only by increasing funding to the States can we heal this ailing program.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, "I am concerned that the scope, authority and independence of the special counsel will be limited by the guidelines the Ethics Committee has established. The House of Representatives, as well as the American public, deserve an investigation which will uncover the truth. At this moment, I am afraid that the apparent restrictions placed on this special counsel will not allow the truth to be uncovered. The rules normally applied by the Ethics Committee to an investigation of a typical member are insufficient in an investigation of the Speaker of the House. Clearly, this investigation has to meet a higher standard of public accountability and integrity."

Prophetic words, indeed, Mr. Speaker.

These are the words of the current Speaker of the House in 1988 referring to the investigation of a former Speaker of this House.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I made the point yesterday with precisely the same speaker that it is out of order, according to the House rules, to discuss a matter that is pending before the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I wish to be heard on the point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, the words, every single word except for "prophetic words, indeed," Mr. Speaker, that I spoke were the words that the current Speaker spoke in 1988. This is not a reference to the current investigation or the current Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will read the following statement:

The Chair has consistently ruled that it is not in order during debate to refer to the official conduct of other Members where such conduct is not under consideration in the House by way of a report from the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct or as a question of the privileges of the House.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I do so so that, when I speak, I will understand the parameters of that.

As long as the focus is on the powers of a special counsel rather than a particular inquiry before the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, it would not be out of order?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman referred to a particular inquiry pending before the committee. VerDate 20-SEP-95 07:02